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Summary record of the 10th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 22 October 2021, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Prvý (Vice-Chair) (Slovakia)

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Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*)*

In the absence of Ms. González López (El Salvador), Mr. Prvý (Slovakia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

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Agenda item 62: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)

Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*) ([A/76/23](#) and [A/76/68](#))

1. **Mr. Edbrooke** (Liechtenstein) said that, for those Non-Self-Governing Territories still waiting to end their colonial status, the international community must work to bring peace, justice and closure. Promising avenues included the agreements to hold referendums on independence as a public expression of self-determination, such as the one scheduled to be held in New Caledonia on 12 December 2021, and the ongoing engagement of some Territories in regional intergovernmental organizations. Populations should not remain colonial possessions as the result of geopolitical or strategic military prerogatives. The promise of self-determination set out in the Charter of the United Nations must be fulfilled by engaging in serious, open dialogue on the future status of the Territories and prioritizing the free and informed decision-making of the peoples concerned in accordance with international law.

2. His delegation upheld the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. The annexation of territory, or any decision to change or amend the border between Israel and Palestine without the explicit consent of both parties, was a violation of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, as was the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories. Progress must be made towards a two-State solution based on international law and the right to self-determination, which was the only viable path to sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

3. Welcoming the appointment of Staffan de Mistura as Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Liechtenstein looked forward to seeing a successful effort under his leadership that would bring about a just and lasting political solution consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Charter.

4. Special political missions should continue to work closely with groups that were underrepresented in positions of power and influence, including women and young people. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan exemplified the vital role that the United Nations system must play in upholding the human rights of all women and girls in Afghanistan and supporting their full and unhindered participation in decision-making processes. A significant number of special political missions had to address, in some way, fundamental questions of autonomy, self-governance and identity for communities within States. In that connection, there was a need for the United Nations system to recognize and address questions of internal self-determination where they arose, with the aim of preventing and resolving future conflicts between the

State and the relevant community or between different communities within a State.

5. **Mr. Manalo** (Philippines) said that the Philippine space policy framework, as outlined in the Philippine Space Act, was focused on six thematic areas: national security and development; hazard management and climate studies; space research and development; space industry capacity-building; space education and awareness; and international cooperation. The Philippines had recently signed an agreement with the Office for Outer Space Affairs to collaborate on strategic areas related to space science and technology. Action should be taken to strengthen the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as the main platform for promoting international cooperation on technical assistance for developing countries in space-related activities; strengthen international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space activities; bridge the technological divide between developing and developed countries through capacity-building and outreach activities; ensure the safety, security and sustainability of the use and exploration of outer space through increased voluntary implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines; and prevent an arms race in outer space through transparent confidence-building measures.

6. The Philippines welcomed the Secretary-General's continued resolve to implement reforms under the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. A book to highlight the contributions of the Philippines to United Nations peace operations had been launched on the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly. In line with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and its victim-centred approach, Member States' troops should be fully vetted and trained before deployment and national investigations officers should be included in all military units deployed to field missions. The United Nations and the Association of South-East Asian Nations should increase their collaboration in such areas as capacity-building, the sharing of best practices and increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping.

7. The Philippines welcomed the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution [75/201](#) and Security Council resolution [2558 \(2020\)](#) on the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, in which those bodies had reiterated the importance of prioritizing prevention, addressing the root causes of conflict and devising long-term peacebuilding strategies with adequate and sustainable financial resources. The core measure of success in peacekeeping operations must be the mandate to protect civilians, with child protection and combating sexual

abuse as key elements. Troop- and police-contributing countries should prioritize the protection of civilians using all means necessary, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, mission mandates and applicable international law. Predeployment training efforts should respond to country-specific challenges and more should be invested in local political solutions to conflicts, which should be reinforced by United Nations peacekeeping. Ensuring the safety of peacekeepers was a high priority. It was important to have rules of engagement that were attuned to the realities on the ground. More women peacekeepers should be deployed at all levels and in leadership positions, and gender perspectives should be integrated into all aspects of peacekeeping.

8. Special political missions served not only to manage short-term crises, but were part of an approach to sustaining peace, and they should therefore be focused to a greater extent on conflict prevention and mediation and involve key stakeholders at every stage. The Philippines continued to support the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on measures to improve the funding and backstopping arrangements for special political missions, including the establishment of a special account. Robust capacity-building and adequate financial support for all peace-related activities must be ensured.

9. The Philippines supported the global communications strategy for the United Nations and the work of the Department of Global Communications and the Committee on Information in highlighting the three pillars of peace and security, development, and human rights. Member States and observers, in partnership with such key stakeholders as civil society, the private sector and the media, should continue to harness the power of information to promote peace, inclusivity and development. Any information released by the United Nations should be properly substantiated and, in the spirit of transparency and impartiality, Member States should be granted the opportunity to give their perspective.

10. **Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan) said that peace, security and stability would elude the Middle East as long as the question of Palestine, the region's central issue, remained unresolved. The war on Gaza in May 2021 had underscored that the status quo was untenable and that the only way to break the cycle of violence was through the two-State solution, leading to the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State within the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

11. The violations perpetrated by Israel in the Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif complex constituted a provocation to all Muslims and would have serious repercussions worldwide. The entire complex was a place of worship exclusively for Muslims, and the Jerusalem Awqaf and Aqsa Mosque Affairs Administration of Jordan was the sole entity legally responsible for managing the Haram al-Sharif and regulating entry and exit, for as long as Jerusalem remained occupied by Israel. Jordan would continue working to preserve the historical and legal status quo of Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian holy sites, under Hashemite custodianship.

12. Jordan was committed to mobilizing international political and financial support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in order to enable it to continue providing vital services to more than 5.5 million Palestine refugees, thereby upholding their right to a life with dignity. UNRWA must continue to fulfil its mandate until a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine refugees was found, in accordance with international law and the agreed terms of reference. Attempts to dissolve the Agency were also aimed at erasing the Palestine refugees' national identity, with which the mandate of UNRWA was inextricably linked, and preventing the Palestinian people from exercising its right to self-determination. Such actions would inflame conflict and undermine the two-State solution. Jordan and Sweden were preparing to convene an international conference to mobilize financial and political support for UNRWA in November 2021.

13. Jordan welcomed the constructive engagement of Morocco, which had proposed the Moroccan autonomy initiative in its effort to reach a definitive political solution to the question of the Sahara. His Government endorsed the initiative as a serious, realistic mechanism that took into account regional specificities and Moroccan sovereignty and territorial integrity. The initiative was in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions adopted by the Organization. The measures taken by Morocco to improve the living standards of the Saharan population, enable it to benefit from the region's resources and combat the COVID-19 pandemic were commendable. Jordan also welcomed the contribution of the Secretary-General to achieving progress in the political process and his appointment of a new Personal Envoy.

14. Jordanian peacekeepers had long performed their duties in a professional and disciplined manner, demonstrating a high level of competence and readiness. In order to address the complex challenges faced by United Nations peace operations, missions must be

given clear, realistic and achievable mandates and be adequately funded and staffed with trained personnel. Continuous triangular cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries had an important part to play.

15. **Mr. Md Monwar Hossain** (Bangladesh) said that his country commended the University for Peace on its contribution to promoting the culture of peace, in particular on having introduced three new courses during the pandemic.

16. His delegation commended the successful convening of the sixty-fourth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, and welcomed the implementation plan for the "Space2030" Agenda. Bangladesh had launched its first communications satellite, Bangabandhu-I, and was preparing to launch another.

17. UNRWA had carried out invaluable work during the pandemic, despite the adverse impact on funding and mobility, which had hindered the delivery of essential services. Bangladesh would continue to provide its contribution and urged the international community to establish sustainable and predictable funding for UNRWA.

18. Despite decades of efforts to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people, the situation had deteriorated owing to the pandemic and an escalation of violence. The blockade of Gaza had entered its fifteenth year. The failure to ensure the accountability of the Israeli occupying Power for its aggression and illegal activities had created further potential for human rights violations. Bangladesh reiterated its steadfast support for the establishment of an independent, viable, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as part of a two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

19. The pandemic had posed new challenges for United Nations peacekeeping operations, including with regard to the rotation of personnel; however, disruptions had been minimized through timely measures and the integrated approach of all United Nations departments concerned. As the leading troop- and police-contributing country, Bangladesh would remain engaged to overcome challenges, especially those affecting the safety and security of peacekeepers.

20. The successful implementation of the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping would ensure innovative, data-driven and technology-enabled peacekeeping. In line with its commitment to environmental management in the field,

Bangladesh would install a solar panel in South Sudan, with support from the Department of Operational Support, and looked forward to further collaboration in that area.

21. Bangladesh would continue to work for the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and was committed to achieving the target set by the United Nations to increase the number of women in peacekeeping operations. His delegation hoped that States participating in the forthcoming United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference would make tangible pledges on ways to improve the overall performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

22. Special political missions remained at the core of the work of United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. Such thematic issues as women and peace and security, promoting regional approaches to peace and security, and peacebuilding and sustaining peace were crucial for the success of such missions, which had continued their work despite many challenges, including those posed by the pandemic.

23. His delegation hoped that the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar would build on the work already done to ensure the safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable return of Rohingyas to Myanmar.

24. Over the previous year, the excellent work of the Department of Global Communications had included its Verified campaign to counter misinformation related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The capacity of the United Nations information centres, whose work included the promotion of multilingualism, should be strengthened.

25. Bangladesh would continue to support the work of the Special Committee on decolonization and recalled that the administering Powers had a responsibility to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the people of those Territories.

26. **Mr. Nayeck** (Mauritius) said that Mauritius expressed its solidarity with the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, which were unable to exercise their right to self-determination. Any attempt to disrupt the territorial integrity of a country was incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Colonialism had been based on conquest, exploitation, subjugation and enforced displacement.

27. UNRWA provided valuable humanitarian and essential services in health and education to Palestine refugees. The Agency should continue to be supported

and strengthened until a just and lasting solution to the plight of Palestine refugees was reached, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

28. His delegation welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara and looked forward to the relaunch of the negotiating process to achieve a just and lasting political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, as well as a peaceful and prosperous future.

29. The United Kingdom had excised the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius in flagrant violation of international law and the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago had been forcibly displaced and were systematically prevented from returning to their ancestral home. In its advisory opinion of 25 February 2019, the International Court of Justice had confirmed that the decolonization of Mauritius had not been conducted in a manner consistent with the right to self-determination and that the continued administration of the Chagos Archipelago by the United Kingdom constituted a wrongful act entailing the international responsibility of that State. It had determined that the United Kingdom was under an obligation to bring to an end its administration of the Chagos Archipelago as rapidly as possible. Following the rendering of the Court's advisory opinion and the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution [73/295](#), the Secretariat had issued a revised map that clearly depicted the Chagos Archipelago as part of the territory of Mauritius. On 28 January 2021, the special chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea established to consider the dispute concerning the delimitation of the maritime boundary between Maldives and Mauritius had reaffirmed the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago on the basis of the determination of the International Court of Justice. At the twenty-seventh Universal Postal Congress, the Universal Postal Union had adopted a decision requiring its International Bureau to recognize the Chagos Archipelago as an integral part of Mauritius, and no longer to recognize the postal operators on Diego Garcia. It was unfortunate that the values and principles of the United Nations were being undermined by one of the very countries that had helped to write them. His delegation was disappointed at the failure of the United Kingdom to end its unlawful administration of the Chagos Archipelago, as requested in resolution [73/295](#). It thanked Member States for their support in ensuring that international law and the principles of justice applied equally to all States.

30. **Mr. Rai** (Nepal) said that colonization and foreign domination under any pretext contravened the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on decolonization. The parties concerned should engage in results-oriented dialogue in order to expedite the independence of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

31. Space science and technologies could provide invaluable tools to assist in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Nepal looked forward to the implementation of the “Space2030” Agenda. Given the far-reaching applications of space, all countries should be given equal access to the exploration and utilization of space resources. Technology transfer was needed in order to ensure that least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States were not excluded from the benefits of space technology.

32. The Department of Global Communications was to be commended for implementing the Organization’s first comprehensive communications strategy and for its role in disseminating evidence-based information, especially about the COVID-19 pandemic, and countering false information through its Verified initiative. His delegation encouraged the Department to highlight the contributions of individual troop- and police-contributing countries to international peace and security. It appreciated the work of United Nations information centres in publishing information in 123 languages, including in such formats as braille and Nepali sign language.

33. Nepal was among the top troop-contributing countries, having contributed over 151,000 peacekeepers who had served with distinction in more than 50 missions. In serving the noble cause of international peace and security, many lives had been lost and hundreds of peacekeepers had been wounded. Conflict areas had become more volatile, complex and challenging, with the emergence of unconventional and asymmetric threats from criminals and terrorists. The safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers were being put at risk owing to unclear mandates, insufficient resources and a lack of technological enablers. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic had exposed the need for urgent medical capacity-building. Nepal supported the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives and the recently launched Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping.

34. Conflict resolution required inclusive and nationally owned political processes; peace could be

sustained only when the root causes of conflict were addressed, primarily poverty, exclusion, inequality and injustice. Nepal supported a normative framework for the protection of civilians and the integration of peacebuilding components at all levels of peace operations. Successful peacekeeping required concerted and coordinated efforts by the Security Council, the host country, troop- and police-contributing countries, regional organizations and the Secretariat to devise well-defined, pragmatic and achievable mandates that were focused on addressing context-specific issues. Troop- and police-contributing countries should be represented in a balanced, fair and equitable manner in the senior positions of the Secretariat and field missions.

35. Nepal valued the contribution of special political missions to supporting Member States in preventing and resolving conflict and transitioning to lasting peace. Such missions had been valuable in addressing complex security and humanitarian environments, including in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. Sustainable funding was needed for their effective functioning.

36. **Mr. Fatah** (Iraq) said that the role of UNRWA, which had provided vital services to Palestine refugees since 1949, went beyond humanitarian assistance. The Agency was a legal means of defence against the occupying Power’s schemes to erase the question of Palestine refugees. Its joint humanitarian-legal approach was a testament to the international community’s moral and legal responsibility to end the occupation of Palestinian territory and recognize the State of Palestine as an independent State. In view of the difficulties faced by the Agency, his delegation called on Member States to increase their assistance to UNRWA to enable it to fulfil its mandate until a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine was reached.

37. A State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention), Iraq did not produce, use, trade in or export landmines and was committed to creating a mine-free, peaceful environment. The more than 20 million landmines planted in Iraq constituted a major obstacle to development, as well as to urban, demographic and infrastructural expansion. His Government was working to put in place mechanisms and formulate a national strategy, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Mine Action Service and the United Nations Children’s Fund. Iraq was also working to train experts in quality control and provide landmine victims with medical assistance, rehabilitation and prosthetic limbs.

38. Peacekeeping operations were one of the Organization's chief tools for performing its core functions. By making a significant contribution to preventive diplomacy, special political missions supported national and regional efforts to promote international peace and security. Iraq valued the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations country team in the areas of humanitarian response, supporting national counter-terrorism efforts and holding elections. UNAMI had a supportive role in promoting peacebuilding, supporting government institutions and resolving pending questions in order to strengthen good governance and develop the capacity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. For those reasons, Iraq had requested that the mandate of UNAMI be extended. Special political missions should adhere strictly to the Charter of the United Nations and international law and comply with their specific mandates, ensuring respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of host countries.

39. The subjection of peoples to foreign domination contravened the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations. Decolonization must therefore remain a priority on the United Nations agenda until independence was granted to all peoples living under colonial rule or until the administering Powers and the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories reached an agreement on a mutually acceptable form of governance.

40. **Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government continued to stand by the Palestinian people in its struggle to recover its land, establish an independent State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital, gain full membership in the United Nations and ensure the return of all Palestine refugees to their homeland, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Syrian Arab Republic would not waver in demanding the return of the entire Syrian Golan occupied in 1967. All measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to change the demographic composition and impose its laws and authority on the occupied Syrian Golan were null, void and without international legal effect.

41. Israel continued to violate international law and United Nations resolutions in the occupied Arab territories with impunity. The recent, frenzied escalation of violations by the occupying Power constituted a threat to regional peace and security. In October 2021, in flagrant violation of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces and the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Israeli occupation authorities had assassinated the Syrian

freedom fighter Madhat Salih al-Salih from inside the occupied Syrian Golan as he was returning to his home in Ayn al-Tinah. The Prime Minister of the Israeli entity had declared his intention to build new settlements on land belonging to the occupied Syrian Golan, hold a conference on strategic regional economic development in the Haspin settlement, on the ruins of the Syrian village of Khasfayn, and increase the settler population from 40,000 to 100,000, in a bid to change the demographic composition of the occupied Syrian Golan. The occupying Israeli forces had stormed into the village of Majdal Shams and arrested the Syrian citizen Sulayman Awwad from his home after his family had protested the construction of settlements in Majdal Shams, Ayn Qinyah, Buq'ata and Mas'adah as part of the project to build wind turbines, which would cause health and environmental harm to the people of the Golan.

42. The Syrian Arab Republic condemned the conduct of Israel in the strongest terms and stressed that the Golan was and would remain Syrian and Arab and would one day be returned to its motherland, Syria. The Syrian people of the occupied Syrian Golan would stand firm in their resolve to reject Israeli occupation practices, cling to their land and fulfil their aspiration of full liberation.

43. Refraining from supporting or recognizing the Israeli occupation was an important step towards dismantling the occupation. In that context, his delegation welcomed the recommendation requesting the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to update the database of all business enterprises involved in settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and to make that update available to the public, in line with Human Rights Council resolution 31/36.

44. UNRWA had been established in 1948 as a temporary arrangement that would operate until the Palestinian people was able to return to its homeland. However, Palestine refugees had long been at the mercy of donor countries and political wrangling. The difficult economic conditions faced by Syria for a decade during the terrorist war, along with the coercive measures imposed on it by certain States, had diminished its capacity to provide Palestine refugees with the means to live dignified lives, as it had done for decades before the war. Moreover, terrorism had destroyed much of the infrastructure of a number of refugee camps, including Yarmuk camp. Those camps, along with UNRWA headquarters, would have to be rebuilt as soon as possible in order to enable the Agency to resume providing services in Syria.

45. The attempts by the occupying Power and certain other States to weaken UNRWA would not nullify the existence of 5.7 million Palestine refugees registered with the Agency or their rights under international law. Attempts to halt financing for UNRWA would only result in a regional humanitarian and security crisis.

46. **Ms. Mealea Heng** (Cambodia) said that her country strongly supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen peacekeeping operations, including the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. In the previous 15 years, Cambodia had deployed more than 7,500 troops, 419 of whom were women, to peacekeeping missions in nine countries. A number of those troops had made the ultimate sacrifice during their missions. Despite the challenges it faced owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cambodia continued to attach great importance to its participation in peacekeeping operations and supported the women and peace and security agenda.

47. COVID-19 vaccines should be equally accessible and affordable to all countries as a global public good. The pandemic had affected every aspect of life, including the conduct of United Nations peacekeeping operations, which had been affected by the disruption of supply chains and of troop deployment and rotation. Every effort must therefore be made to ensure that peacekeeping operations could continue to fulfil their mandates. Troops must adhere to the relevant guidelines and safety standards, and appropriate medical treatment must be available to any that contracted the virus.

48. Peacekeeping mandates should be clear, credible, achievable and adequately resourced. They should clearly and concisely define the roles and responsibilities of all key actors, and should take into account the protection of civilians. To ensure the effectiveness of operations, peacekeeping personnel should be given adequate predeployment, in-mission and post-deployment training, reliable field support and access to modern technology.

49. **Mr. Hamamoto** (Japan) said that, despite significant progress, including the steady destruction of stockpiles and decrease in minefields in most affected countries, landmines continued to threaten local populations. With its mine action expertise and technologies, Japan actively contributed towards the international goal of ending that scourge. In 2020, Japan had provided assistance to 21 countries and regions, in collaboration with the United Nations Mine Action Service, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

50. Japan commended the publication of the 2020 report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on

the Effects of Atomic Radiation on the levels and effects of radiation exposure due to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station (A/76/46, chapter III, section B). Japan had long been deeply committed to nuclear safety, even more so following the nuclear accident in 2011.

51. In view of the growing number of space actors, it was important that each country conducted its space activities in a responsible manner to ensure the safety, security, sustainability and stability of outer space. In that context, Japan welcomed the progress made in the discussions during the 2021 session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Japan was actively engaged in international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space, including in the areas of human spaceflight, space exploration and science, and remote sensing. Japan had initiated a joint project with the Office for Outer Space Affairs on space law for new space actors to support Asia-Pacific countries in drafting their national space legislation.

52. UNRWA played a vital role in promoting peace and stability in the Middle East and helping Palestine refugees to achieve their full potential, including through the provision of basic services, such as health care and livelihood opportunities. UNRWA had shown that it was committed to reforming its operations and governance in order to become more efficient, transparent and accountable, and it was important that the Agency maintain its neutrality. In 2021, Japan had disbursed \$40.9 million to UNRWA and had donated a further \$5.3 million to mitigate food insecurity among Palestine refugees in response to the escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip in May 2021.

53. His country remained committed to supporting a two-State solution based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. Japan welcomed the ceasefire that had been sustained since May, but remained concerned about the situation on the ground, with acts of violence perpetrated by both sides, as well as continuous settlement activities, the destruction of Palestinian homes and the expulsion of Palestinians in the West Bank. A solution could be achieved only through negotiations and efforts to build trust between the parties. Japan welcomed recent high-level contact between the two sides and measures taken by Israel to ease restrictions on access to Gaza. It would continue to promote the economic self-reliance of Palestine through its own initiatives, such as the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity.

54. Japan welcomed the continued efforts of the Secretariat in connection with the Action for

Peacekeeping Plus initiative, and emphasized the particular importance of capacity-building. Through the United Nations triangular partnership programme, Japan provided engineering and medical training to peacekeepers. The number of Member States participating in the programme was growing and, in connection with the Secretariat's efforts to incorporate innovative technologies, Japan was supporting a telemedicine capacity-building pilot project. Special political missions played a critical role in providing seamless support to peace processes and in conflict prevention.

55. The Department of Global Communications reached a large number of people through its global network of United Nations information centres. During the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, the information centre in Tokyo had played a vital role in highlighting support for the Sustainable Development Goals through sport. His delegation thanked the Department for arranging the Peace Bell ceremony on 17 September 2021.

56. **Ms. Thilmeeza Hussain** (Maldives) said that the work of UNRWA in providing humanitarian assistance to the Palestine refugees continued to be essential. As highlighted in the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA ([A/76/306](#)), Palestine refugees remained among the most vulnerable in their communities, as discrimination and marginalization prevented their enjoyment of several basic human rights and they suffered from poverty and unemployment, especially among women and youth, problems that had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. UNRWA had worked commendably to alleviate those hardships and needed greater funding.

57. The Syrian Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Golan continued to face systemic human rights violations. The illegal occupation and attempts at annexation, control and seizure of their lands and resources by Israel must end immediately.

58. The Palestinian people continued to face grave violations, including the destruction of homes, evictions and home demolitions, the forceful separation of families, arbitrary arrest by Israeli security forces, unfair trials and excessive use of force resulting in death. The blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip restricted the movement of persons and goods, including humanitarian relief items, limited the supply of electricity and water, and reduced access to medical care, education and economic opportunities. Several of the buildings in the Gaza Strip that had been targeted in May 2021 had been previously destroyed and reconstructed in 2014. Israeli forces had targeted

civilian structures, including offices, homes and media organizations, in violation of international humanitarian law. In addition, 66 children had been killed as a result of the attacks and families had been displaced. The international community must fulfil its responsibility towards the Palestinian people and ensure that the relevant resolutions and decisions were respected by all. Maldives remained committed to ensuring that the inhumane treatment of Palestinians was brought to an end. The only resolution could be a two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, and with Palestine and Israel coexisting as equal nations.

59. **Mr. Pérez Ayestarán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that much remained to be done in order to eradicate colonialism and its legacy, including the resolution of border disputes through direct negotiations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Occupying and administering Powers should participate actively in dialogue with a view to achieving a just solution to each pending issue.

60. For more than 100 years, Puerto Rico had been subjected to colonial rule and its people had been denied the full exercise and enjoyment of its human rights, including the right to self-determination. His country supported the right of Puerto Rico to choose its own political, economic, social and cultural system in order to address the pressing and structural challenges that it faced.

61. His country continued to support the legitimate rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. It called upon the United Kingdom to resume direct negotiations, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution [2065 \(XX\)](#), in order to achieve a peaceful, just and definitive solution.

62. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirmed its support for Mauritius in the sovereignty dispute over the Chagos Archipelago. It called upon the United Kingdom to bring an end to its administration of the Archipelago as rapidly as possible and without preconditions, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [73/295](#), and complete the decolonization of Mauritius.

63. His country supported the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people and advocated finding a peaceful, just, enduring and mutually acceptable solution to the question of Western Sahara, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The recent appointment of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara could help to revive the political process

by promoting direct negotiations between the parties and ensuring the full implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.

64. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirmed its support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. It would continue to work towards the achievement of a free, independent and sovereign Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and as a full member of the Organization. The two-State solution, which had the broad support of the international community, was the only way to end the conflict. The occupying Power should fulfil its obligations under the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council and put an end to its systematic violations of international law, its policy of colonial occupation and apartheid, and its crimes against humanity and war crimes. The international community should reject any unilateral approach and adopt without delay the measures necessary to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilian population and ensure that those responsible for such crimes were brought to justice. His country supported UNRWA, which, despite its financial difficulties, delivered humanitarian and development assistance to millions of Palestine refugees.

65. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela acknowledged the key role of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and reiterated its support for the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Peacekeeping operations must observe the three basic principles of peacekeeping, namely consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence and in defence of the mandate. They should have realistic and achievable mandates, with specific, clearly defined objectives; however, the protection of civilians, although it might form a part of such a mandate, was a central responsibility of the host State.

66. His country again denounced the armed attacks perpetrated by Colombian armed groups against the territory and population of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, including the alleged deployment of antipersonnel mines along the border. While recognizing the important role played by the United Nations Mine Action Service, his delegation urged all international actors to comply fully and effectively with their obligations and strengthen regional and international cooperation on mine action.

67. Outer space must be used and explored for exclusively peaceful purposes for the benefit of all countries, irrespective of the degree of their economic

or scientific development, and without threatening the security of any State. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela remained concerned that the scientific and technological progress achieved through the exploration and use of outer space could lead to the deployment of national missile defence systems or other military systems that could trigger an arms race in space.

68. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the important role of information and communications technologies in an increasingly interconnected world. Those tools must be available to all countries, without discrimination, and used responsibly; in reality, however, the policies of aggression of some Powers, as reflected in the application of illegal unilateral coercive measures, undermined national efforts to develop such technologies.

69. Faced with an onslaught of neocolonial policies, the international community must redouble its efforts in support of multilateralism and international law in order to realize the fundamental rights of all peoples to peace, freedom, sovereignty, independence, justice and self-determination.

70. **Mr. Portorreal Brandao** (Dominican Republic) said that his country continued to support decolonization and the right of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination. The Dominican Republic supported the efforts of Morocco to achieve a credible and mutually acceptable political solution to the question of Western Sahara, acknowledged the efforts of the Secretary-General to reach a realistic and lasting solution and called upon the parties concerned to maintain a spirit of cooperation.

71. In its tradition of regional solidarity, the Dominican Republic supported the just claims of Argentina to the exercise of its sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The only way to end the current situation was through a negotiated agreement between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom. His delegation fully supported the mission of good offices of the Secretary-General, aimed at the resumption of the necessary negotiations for a peaceful and definitive settlement.

72. In view of the proliferation of fake news, the United Nations needed to adopt new technologies in its provision of objective information, but without leaving behind those who did not have access to such technologies. Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, the Department of Global Communications had adapted and provided multilingual content to deliver key messages related to COVID-19 and the actions of the Organization.

73. Multilingualism could help to promote an international system based on international cooperation, solidarity and inclusion. All United Nations publications and activities should be available in the six official languages in order to effectively inform citizens worldwide about the Organization's work and contribute to the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity.

74. **Ms. Faye** (Senegal) said that, as a major troop- and police-contributing country, Senegal called upon all stakeholders to strengthen collective efforts to ensure the safety and security of deployed personnel. Her delegation thanked the Secretariat for the prompt containment measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the efforts made to vaccinate troops. It welcomed measures to consider the comparative advantages of telemedicine in missions, especially in remote areas. The Secretariat should further promote the use of technology to strengthen early warning systems and enhance protection.

75. Senegal paid tribute to the soldiers who had paid a heavy price for the maintenance of international peace. It remained committed to accountability for all crimes committed against them, as recommended in Security Council resolution [2589 \(2021\)](#). In view of the fragile nature of peacekeeping, prevention and mediation must be at the forefront of efforts to achieve a lasting peace. In that connection, special political missions should be strengthened through adequate funding. Ensuring the full and effective participation of women at all levels of peace processes was crucial to conflict resolution. Africa must occupy a special place in United Nations policies and strategies on crisis prevention and resolution, as well as post-conflict reconstruction. The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union was crucial to seeking political solutions to the disputes in Africa.

76. Senegal opposed the annexation of Palestinian territories and the continued expulsion of Palestinians from their land, not to mention the disproportionate use of force, which had once again taken a significant human and material toll during the events of May 2021. The international community should intensify its efforts to fulfil the right of the Palestinians to an independent, viable State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting in peace and security with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders. Until a political solution to the conflict was reached, the ongoing work of UNRWA must be supported.

77. The Moroccan autonomy initiative for the Sahara region provided the basis for a realistic, pragmatic, lasting political solution based on compromise to the situation in the Moroccan Sahara and the Tindouf

camps. Senegal welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahara and urged him to resume the process launched by his predecessor, in the same format, as requested by the Security Council in its resolutions [2494 \(2019\)](#) and [2548 \(2020\)](#). The parties should build on the momentum of in the first two round tables in Geneva in order to complete the United Nations-led political process. Acknowledging the progress made by the Government of Morocco on the promotion of human rights, democracy and economic and social development and taking into account the fact that some 6,000 Senegalese nationals lived in the Sahara, Senegal had opened a consulate general in Dakhla in April 2021.

78. Senegal called upon all States to conduct themselves responsibly, including with regard to the peaceful uses of outer space. In accordance with its international commitments under the Ottawa Convention, the Government of Senegal was working to achieve the total eradication of anti-personnel mines in the southern region of the country by 2026. While mindful of the financial implications, her delegation called upon the United Nations to re-examine its approach to multilingualism at Headquarters and in the field, and to give French due consideration as a working language.

79. **Mr. Lam Padilla** (Guatemala) said that, while colonized peoples had the right to decide freely on their political status and future, the principle of self-determination was not absolute and, as established in General Assembly resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#), must not be used as a pretext to undermine the territorial integrity of existing States. In the case of the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, the colonial situation had been recognized as "special and particular" by the United Nations because of its distinctive characteristics. The case involved a colonized territory, not a colonized people. Guatemala firmly supported the legitimate rights of Argentina and commended the ongoing demonstration of political will by Argentina to resolve the dispute through negotiation and dialogue, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Despite the efforts of Argentina and the United Nations, however, the United Kingdom systematically refused to resume sovereignty negotiations. Guatemala urged the United Kingdom to comply with its obligations under the Charter. The colonial situation had been further aggravated by the illegal exploration and exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources by the United Kingdom in the disputed area. Such activities were contrary to the letter and spirit of the relevant United

Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 31/49, in which the two parties had been called upon to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation while the islands were going through the process recommended by the General Assembly.

80. On the question of Western Sahara, Guatemala supported the efforts of Morocco towards finding a just and lasting political solution and endorsed the Moroccan autonomy initiative presented in 2007, which constituted a realistic, credible and serious basis for reaching a negotiated solution between the parties while respecting the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Morocco. A solution was necessary, not only for the people of Western Sahara, but also for the stability and security of the Maghreb region. His country welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, whose experience would help to strengthen the negotiations among all the parties involved.

81. Guatemala deeply regretted the loss of human life and deteriorating humanitarian situation in several areas where peacekeeping missions were established. Guatemala welcomed the initiatives that were being implemented by the Secretariat, such as the Action for Peace Plus initiative, to strengthen the implementation of peacekeeping mandates. Further efforts should be made to strengthen the use of technologies and cooperation with host States. The latter was crucial to the success of peacekeeping missions, as host governments had a key role in ensuring mandate implementation, including by facilitating access and fulfilling their responsibilities with regard to the security of peacekeepers. Status-of-forces agreements must be respected, including with regard to facilitating the transportation of ammunition by the appropriate national agencies. His delegation hoped that the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping would help to improve the security of peacekeepers and identify new threats against civilians, peacekeepers, political processes and missions. The initiative must be implemented in accordance with the guiding principles established by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, as the only forum of the General Assembly with a mandate for the comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects.

82. There was scope for the Organization, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Security Council to strengthen triangular cooperation. For example, the Secretariat should select fully qualified, trained personnel for deployment to the field and avoid

choosing contributing countries that included caveats in their memorandums of understanding.

83. Special political missions had an important role in implementing peacebuilding mandates based on the priorities of the host country. The Security Council should analyse past transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding mandates to identify resulting security gaps, such as had arisen when United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti had become the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti. Exit strategies and mandate changes must be adapted to the situation on the ground.

84. **Mr. Kadyautumbe** (Zimbabwe) said that his country was deeply concerned about the continued denial of the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, a right that had been consistently reaffirmed by the United Nations and the African Union. His delegation urged the General Assembly and the Security Council to fully and effectively assume their responsibilities by ensuring the implementation of the relevant resolutions and the protection of the political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Sahrawi people and their right to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources. In its judgment of 29 September 2021, the General Court of the European Union had ruled that the agreements concluded between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco were invalid because they had illegally included the territory, territorial waters and wealth of the Sahrawi Republic, without its consent. In its ruling, the Court had indicated that Western Sahara had a clearly defined territory, which should remain one and indivisible. Africa could not become a prosperous, integrated, peaceful, strong and united continent while Western Sahara remained under occupation.

85. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara had been established to organize a referendum in Western Sahara and should do so without further delay. The lack of progress was a serious indictment of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. The appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara was a welcome development. It was only through sincere, free and credible negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, that the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara could be realized and a lasting solution to the conflict reached. His delegation called upon the Special Committee to conduct a visiting mission to Western Sahara, as the only mission it had conducted to the Territory had been in 1975. Self-determination and independence were intrinsic fundamental rights that should be enjoyed by all without distinction, and Zimbabwe therefore called

upon the United Nations, as the guarantor of international law, to fulfil its obligations to the Sahrawi people and the comity of nations.

86. **Ms. Maitra** (India) said that, through the coordinated communications response of the Department of Global Communications, the United Nations had become a trusted source of reliable COVID-19-related information. Her delegation commended the Department on the Verified and Pause campaigns and the United Nations information centres on their contribution to those initiatives. India had been one of the co-authors of the cross-regional statement on the “infodemic” in the context of COVID-19, which highlighted the use of information and communications technologies to mislead the public and fuel violence and hatred. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/267](#), Global Media and Information Literacy Week would be commemorated from 24 to 31 October. While the Department’s Only Together campaign to promote vaccine equity was commendable, such campaigns had been predominantly focused on the COVAX initiative. The Department should also highlight the efforts being made by Member States to ensure the availability of reliable, affordable vaccines. An enhanced focus on vaccine safety was needed to shore up public confidence in vaccines and to help to address discriminatory travel regimes. Her delegation valued the Department’s support in commemorating the International Day of Yoga and the International Day of Non-Violence and a high-level dialogue, in partnership with United Nations Academic Impact, on gender equality in memory of the late Indian activist and scholar Hansa Mehta.

87. UNRWA, an essential and valued partner in Palestinian nation-building, worked to ensure a life of dignity for millions of Palestine refugees and had taken steps to ensure transparency in its operations and adherence to the United Nations standards in humanitarian services, including in education. The Agency had managed to adapt to the COVID-19 situation by introducing telemedicine, home delivery of food and medicines and digital learning platforms. The Agency faced a funding shortfall of \$100 million, despite the resumption of funding from its traditional donors and its introduction of innovative global fundraising, outreach and internal cost-saving measures. In response, India had committed \$10 million for 2021 and 2022, in addition to its ongoing development assistance to Palestine and capacity-building scholarships for Palestinians, which were also open to Palestine refugees.

88. A durable solution to the Palestine refugee question could be achieved only through the establishment of a Palestinian State living side by side

in peace and security with Israel, within mutually agreed borders. The resumption of direct peace negotiations between the two sides provided the best opportunity to resolve all final status issues and achieve the two-State solution. The international community had an important role to play in reviving those negotiations, and India would remain fully supportive of all such efforts.

89. Special political missions remained a key instrument for the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. The United Nations System-Wide Task Force on Medical Evacuations in Response to COVID-19 and the United Nations system-wide COVID-19 vaccination programme had helped to protect the capabilities of the special political missions to deliver on their mandates during the pandemic. The principles of impartiality, consent of the parties, national ownership and national responsibility should underpin a transparent, participatory and consultative process from the inception of the mission to mandate formulation and renewal.

90. As one of the largest troop and police contributors to United Nations peace operations, India was committed to supporting the Secretary-General’s initiatives, such as Action for Peacekeeping Plus. India also supported the implementation of an integrated performance policy framework, covering all stakeholders and all phases of peacekeeping operations. Honest assessments of peacekeeping performance were essential to an effective accountability system that would avoid repeating past errors. India supported efforts to enhance technological interventions in United Nations peacekeeping operations and had recently provided \$1.6 million for the roll-out of the Unite Aware platform, which was aimed at improving the safety and security of peacekeepers and effective mandate delivery.

91. India had always been at the forefront of the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. As the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism began, the international community must step up its efforts to conclude the decolonization process. It was important to recall that the United Nations had established the principle of self-determination as a vehicle for promoting decolonization, not as a justification for undermining the territorial integrity of any Member State. A pragmatic approach would allow the legitimate wishes of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to be fulfilled. Cooperation with international agencies and actors should be enhanced with a view to channelling resources for building the capacities of the Territories.

92. **Mr. Ahidjo** (Cameroon) said that, having been exposed to mines and other improvised explosive devices in its fight against Boko Haram and other asymmetric threats on its territory, Cameroon recognized the need for international cooperation and assistance in order to eliminate such weapons and tackle the humanitarian repercussions of their use. It was grateful to its bilateral and multilateral partners for their commitment and assistance and urged them to provide additional capacity-building and demining equipment for its defence and security forces, as well as technological support to promote the conduct of scientific research to design effective, sustainable and appropriate mine action techniques.

93. Cameroon was a long-standing contributor of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations, thereby supporting multilateralism and international cooperation. Partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations should be strengthened, and adequate assistance should be given to troop-contributing countries to improve the preparedness of their peacekeepers and other components of peacekeeping operations. In 2008, Cameroon had established the International School for Security Forces to provide capacity-building for African troop-contributing countries. It also hosted the African Standby Force Continental Logistics Base, which stored and managed equipment for peace and humanitarian operations of the African Union.

94. Given the evolution in the nature of special political missions over the past two decades, it was important to continuously improve their organization, planning and supply chains. Missions should have clear, achievable mandates and adequate resources. The current mode of funding should be reconsidered and the financing of the missions should be based on the same criteria and mechanisms that governed the funding of peacekeeping operations. Alternatively, they could be allocated separate, predictable budgets, which would help to ensure that certain peacekeeping operations could be successfully transformed into special political missions, thus improving the chances for peacemaking.

95. The increasing militarization of space and the proliferation of space debris posed an existential threat. A legally binding framework and increased international cooperation at every level were needed to preserve peace in outer space, for the benefit of all peoples, regardless of their level of development. Cameroon remained committed to international cooperation to address the dangers associated with atomic radiation and thanked its partners, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, for their support in the acquisition of radiation detection equipment.

96. His delegation commended the Department of Global Communications on its work to counter disinformation on the pandemic through its Verified initiative, and urged the Department to expand the initiative to address other issues of concern to Member States, such as hate speech. The United Nations should work with Member States to raise awareness, in particular among young people and academics, of the effects of disinformation and fake news on stability and social cohesion.

97. On the question of Western Sahara, his Government supported the political process promoted by the Secretary-General and welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara. The latter should build on the work carried out by his predecessor, which had led to constructive dialogue among the parties concerned in 2018 and 2019. All parties should continue to take a pragmatic and open approach to the negotiations, with a view to reaching a mutually agreed lasting solution to the dispute, on the basis of compromise and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. A political solution and enhanced cooperation among the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union would contribute to stability and security in the Sahel region and help to build unity across the continent.

98. **Mr. Bustamante** (Chile) said that the international community should continue its efforts to complete the decolonization process within the framework of the United Nations and international law. The Government and people of Chile reiterated their long-standing and consistent support for the legitimate sovereignty rights of Argentina over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom should resume negotiations in order to find a peaceful and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute as soon as possible, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and other multilateral forums, including General Assembly resolution 31/49.

99. Resolving the issue of Western Sahara in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations would help to strengthen regional and international stability and security, foster sustainable development and promote human rights. All parties should show a renewed commitment to advancing the political process in preparation for further negotiations, in a spirit of realism and compromise.

100. In spite of its precarious financial situation, which had been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic,

UNRWA continued to play a key role in assisting 5.6 million Palestine refugees with health care, education and infrastructure, and its work had a major impact on matters of international peace and security. In particular, it was providing vital assistance in response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Member States should ensure the Agency's financial viability.

101. With regard to the two special political missions in Latin America, Chile had worked with Colombia during the peace process and would continue to do so in the implementation of the peace agreements through the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. Chile had been involved in the process in Haiti since the creation of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti through to the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, which was a testament to decades of work to promote the principle of national ownership in that country. Chile supported the important work that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan had conducted, despite logistical and financial challenges. The Mission's humanitarian assistance had become even more critical given recent events that had upset the delicate balance in Afghanistan. His delegation welcomed the recent renewal by the Security Council of the mandates of the missions in Haiti and Afghanistan and trusted that the mandate of the mission in Colombia would also be renewed.

102. Peacekeeping operations and special political missions could cope with unexpected problems, such as the pandemic, only with the full commitment of all those involved. The participation of civil society, young people and women was critical for early warning and peacebuilding, cooperation, capacity-building and the establishment of support networks at the local, regional and international levels. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should continue to take a multidimensional approach to conflicts, with a view to implementing cross-cutting mandates on prevention and gender, ensuring the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel and providing missions with sufficient, predictable resources to enable them to fulfil their mandates.

103. **Mr. Tchalaré** (Togo) said that his delegation paid tribute to the peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the line of duty and expressed its condolences to their families and countries. In addition to the pandemic, all peacekeeping operations were confronted by significant challenges, in particular in ensuring balance between their mandates and available resources. As a significant contributor of troops, Togo understood the extent of those challenges and supported the Secretary-General's reform of peacekeeping missions.

104. His country was concerned by the status quo that had characterized the issue of decolonization for many years. Togo reiterated its unwavering support for all the political processes under way aimed at reaching peaceful, lasting solutions for the benefit of all parties, and welcomed the efforts of the Special Committee on decolonization in that connection.

105. The COVID-19 pandemic posed a particularly significant threat to refugees and other persons uprooted or displaced by conflicts. In order to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe, States should continue to support UNRWA and respond to its call for funds to address its financial shortfall. Togo was pleased that the United States was once again among the donors of UNRWA.

106. His delegation welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and hoped that he would give renewed impetus to the political process in the interests of the parties to the crisis and the region as a whole.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

107. **Ms. Shapir Ben Naftaly** (Israel) said that the ceaseless and cruel violations of the most basic human rights by Syria against its own population had rendered that regime illegitimate. Syria had forfeited the right to make baseless allegations against her delegation. While it would not be possible to address all the gross violations committed by Syria at the current meeting, the international community must not turn a blind eye to the most appalling of them – namely, the use of chemical weapons against civilians, including children and women. Syria also allowed Iran to establish bases within its borders and a radical terrorist organization to operate undisturbed on its land, destabilizing the region and compromising the safety of its people. The regime had no legitimacy to speak about morality or human rights.

108. **Mr. Fairlamb** (United Kingdom) said that his country had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, which had been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. Mauritius had never held sovereignty over the Archipelago and the United Kingdom did not recognize its claim. However, the United Kingdom had a long-standing commitment, first made in 1965, to ceding sovereignty over the territory to Mauritius when it was no longer required for defence purposes. It stood by that commitment. The joint United Kingdom-United States defence facility on Diego Garcia helped to keep people in Britain and around the world safe and to combat some of the most challenging threats to international peace and security.

109. His country was aware of the judgment delivered on 28 January 2021 by the special chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea formed to deal with the dispute concerning delimitation of a maritime boundary claimed by Mauritius to exist between Mauritius and Maldives in the Indian Ocean. The United Kingdom was not a party to those proceedings, which could have no effect for the United Kingdom or for maritime delimitation between the United Kingdom, in respect of the British Indian Ocean Territory, and Maldives.

110. The United Kingdom had been disappointed that the matter of the Chagos Archipelago had been referred to the International Court of Justice, contrary to the principle that the Court should not consider bilateral disputes without the consent of both States concerned. An advisory opinion was advice provided to the General Assembly at its request, not a legally binding judgment. General Assembly resolution [73/295](#) adopted following the advisory opinion did not create any legal obligations for Member States. Neither the advisory opinion nor the resolution altered the legal situation, which was a sovereignty dispute between the United Kingdom and Mauritius. The Assembly was not the appropriate forum to resolve that bilateral dispute.

111. The designation of the British Indian Ocean Territory had been modified on maps produced by the United Nations following the adoption of resolution [73/295](#). That resolution was not legally binding, and his delegation had voted against its adoption. Such modification did not alter or determine sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and made no difference to the consistent position of the United Kingdom.

112. His Government was currently delivering an approximately £40 million support package to improve Chagossian livelihoods and had gone to great lengths to find projects that would be of the greatest benefit to Chagossian communities. It had facilitated successful visits by Chagossians to the British Indian Ocean Territory and provided English language courses in Mauritius.

113. The United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas of both territories, or regarding the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in article 1 of the two International Covenants on human rights, by virtue of which they freely determined their political status and freely pursued their economic, social and cultural development. Consequently, no dialogue on sovereignty was possible unless the Falkland Islanders

so wished. The 2013 referendum had sent a clear message that the people of the Islands did not want a dialogue on sovereignty. Argentina should respect those wishes.

114. **Ms. Aliaa Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the attempts by the representative of Israel, the occupying Power, to cover up that country's countless crimes against her people in the occupied Syrian Golan by fabricating accusations against Syria, were truly laughable. The occupying Israeli forces had given all manner of support to armed terrorist groups, chief among them the Nusrah Front, which was on the Security Council's list of terrorist entities, and the terrorist Da'esh organization, which had perpetrated the most heinous acts of violence against Syrians. Under the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces, Israel had an obligation to refrain from conducting military operations across the line of separation. The representative of Israel should examine the periodic reports on the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, in which frequent Israeli violations of that Agreement were reported.

115. **Mr. Assadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the representative of the Israeli regime had made unfounded claims against Syria and his country that did not reflect the situation on the ground. The Israeli regime had a long history of pursuing opportunistic policies and diverting attention from its inhuman and savage action against Palestine and other nations in the Middle East. The Israeli regime should be reminded of its record of flagrantly violating hundreds of resolutions adopted by various United Nations organs as a result of its acts of aggression and occupation and its well-documented atrocities and war crimes against Palestinians and people in other countries. The international community, the United Nations and the Security Council therefore remain vigilant and monitor the destabilizing policies and illegal practices of that regime in the region, along with their ramifications for international peace and security, with a view to holding Israel accountable.

116. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina) said that his delegation reiterated the statements made by the President of Argentina at the General Assembly on 21 September 2021 ([A/76/PV.4](#)) and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina at the meeting of the Special Committee on decolonization on 24 June 2021 ([A/AC.109/2021/SR.6](#)). The Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were an integral part of the national territory of Argentina and, being illegally occupied by the United Kingdom, they were the subject of a sovereignty dispute between the two parties, which

was recognized by a number of international organizations. That illegal occupation had led the General Assembly to adopt 10 resolutions on the issue, all of which recognized the existence of the sovereignty dispute and called on the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations with a view to finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute as soon as possible. For its part, the Special Committee on decolonization had repeatedly adopted resolutions in the same vein, most recently the resolution adopted on 24 June 2021.

117. The principle of self-determination, which the United Kingdom used as the basis for its refusal to resume negotiations on sovereignty, was inapplicable to the dispute in question, as affirmed in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee. Consequently, the 2013 vote held in the Malvinas Islands was simply a unilateral action undertaken by the United Kingdom, devoid of any legal value; it therefore in no way changed the essence of the question of the Malvinas, it did not resolve the sovereignty dispute and it had no effect on the legitimate rights of Argentina.

118. According to the advisory opinion recently adopted by the International Court of Justice concerning the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, it was for the General Assembly to pronounce on the modalities by which the free and genuine will of the people of a Non-Self-Governing Territory was expressed, including the formulation of questions submitted for popular consultation. Consequently, a so-called referendum without General Assembly approval would lack legal validity.

119. Moreover, the vote of 2013 had done nothing to change the course of meetings held in the Special Committee since that date, where resolutions on the question of the Malvinas Islands continued to be approved by consensus in the usual terms. The solution to the sovereignty dispute was not dependent on the results of a vote in which British citizens had been asked whether they wished to remain British. Allowing the British inhabitants of the Islands to arbitrate in a sovereignty dispute to which their own country was a party distorted the right to self-determination of peoples, given that, in the case of the Malvinas Islands, there did not exist a people within the meaning of international law. The interests and way of life of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands were adequately addressed by resolutions of the General Assembly and by the Constitution of Argentina. Lastly, Argentina reaffirmed its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South

Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which were an integral part of its national territory.

120. **Mr. Nayeck** (Mauritius) said that the United Kingdom had committed gross violations of international law, human rights and United Nations resolutions when it had excised the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius and forcibly displaced the inhabitants in the most inhumane manner. Those people were systematically denied the right to return. It was hard to believe that the United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Archipelago, given that none of the 28 judges of the three international bodies that had considered the matter had supported its claim. Two members of the arbitral tribunal constituted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea had clearly stated that Mauritius had sovereignty over the Archipelago, while the three others had held that the tribunal did not have jurisdiction over the matter. When the International Court of Justice had delivered its advisory opinion of 25 February 2019 concerning the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, 13 of the 14 judges considering the matter had decided that Mauritius had sovereignty over the Archipelago, while the fourteenth judge had made it clear that she had not addressed the merits. A nine-member special chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the dispute concerning delimitation of the maritime boundary between Mauritius and Maldives in the Indian Ocean had unanimously ruled on 28 January 2021 that Mauritius was the coastal State in respect of the Archipelago, that authoritative determinations of the International Court of Justice had legal effect and that the claims of sovereignty made by the United Kingdom could be considered only as assertions. For its part, the Universal Postal Union had decided to implement General Assembly resolution [73/295](#) by formally acknowledging, for the purpose of the activities of the Union, the Archipelago as an integral part of the territory of Mauritius. The United Kingdom, which claimed to be a firm supporter of United Nations institutions and the rule of law, should comply with those international rulings and eliminate the remnants of colonialism in Africa.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.